

**NATHANIEL “DANNY” MANIGUALT**  
**Danny’s Live Crabs, North Charleston, Charleston, SC**

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Date: September 16, 2014

Location: Mr. Manigault’s home, North Charleston, SC

Interviewer: Sara Wood

Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs

Length: Twelve minutes

Project: Lowcountry Maritime

**00:00:00**

**Sara Wood:** It is September 16, 2014. I'm on Echo Avenue in North Charleston, South Carolina. This is Sara Wood for the Southern Foodways Alliance and I'm sitting here with Mr. Danny Manigault. Mr. Manigault I'm wondering for the record will you say hello and introduce yourself and tell me who you are and where we are right now?

**00:00:20**

**Danny Manigault:** Well I'm Nathaniel Manigault, owners of Danny's Live Crabs in the Union Heights subdivision.

**00:00:28**

**Sara Wood:** And for the record will you tell me your birth date Mr. Manigault?

**00:00:30**

**Danny Manigault:** Six, twenty, forty. [June 20, 1940.]

**00:00:32**

**Sara Wood:** And you can you tell me a little bit about where you grew up and what it was like there?

**00:00:37**

**Danny Manigault:** Well I grew up in—in the city of Charleston, South Carolina and moving into this building right here, 1990 Echo Avenue, when I was a junior in high school, and from there to Goose Creek where I'm residing now.

**00:00:56**

**Sara Wood:** And can you tell me your parents' names for the record?

**00:01:00**

**Danny Manigault:** Anna Simmons and Cyrus Simmons.

**00:01:04**

**Sara Wood:** And were they both from around the Charleston area?

**00:01:05**

**Danny Manigault:** Yes, yes they were, uh-huh.

**00:01:07**

**Sara Wood:** Mr. Manigault can you tell me how you got started in this business?

**00:01:11**

**Danny Manigault:** Well, a neighbor of mine used to sell crabs and I bought a boat, so I decided to try it and found out I could make a couple extra dollars and—and I just did it.

**00:01:23**

**Sara Wood:** And what—what was your neighbor's name?

**00:01:27**

**Danny Manigault:** Levi—I don't remember his last name.

**00:01:29**

**Sara Wood:** Did he live here in this neighborhood?

**00:01:32**

**Danny Manigault:** Yes, yes, he did, uh-hm.

**00:01:33**

**Sara Wood:** And do you remember what year that was, how old you were?

**00:01:34**

**Danny Manigault:** Oh, I know it has—had to be at least thirty-plus years ago. I don't remember the exact date.

**00:01:43**

**Sara Wood:** And for someone who has never crabbed before can you talk about what it was like to get started in this?

**00:01:50**

**Danny Manigault:** Well I was always a—a fisherman so I knew, it's just a—as simple as buying some traps, getting your permit, and then buying your bait and putting it in and then get an area, put the traps out and then go pick your crabs up the next day.

**00:02:08**

**Sara Wood:** And what did you fish—did you fish for—just a hobby before or were you doing it for a living?

00:02:12

**Danny Manigault:** Yes, it was just a hobby, uh-huh.

00:02:15

**Sara Wood:** What kind of fish did you like to catch?

00:02:17

**Danny Manigault:** Whiting, croaker, spots, sharks. That's it.

00:02:25

**Sara Wood:** And your boat, what's the name of your boat?

00:02:27

**Danny Manigault:** It doesn't have a name. I didn't give it a name. No.

00:02:32

**Sara Wood:** How come you decided not to give it a name?

00:02:35

**Danny Manigault:** Well I was just too busy I guess. *[Laughs]* But I didn't give it a name.

00:02:40

**Sara Wood:** Now did your father and mother did they work on the water at all?

**00:02:43**

**Danny Manigault:** No, they didn't. My granddaddy used to take me out at an early age but we would just—just go shrimping.

**00:02:51**

**Sara Wood:** Did your—what's your grandfather's name?

**00:02:53**

**Danny Manigault:** Uh, James Jenkins.

**00:03:00**

**Sara Wood:** Did he do it for a living?

**00:03:01**

**Danny Manigault:** No, no, no. He was a carpenter, uh-hm.

**00:03:04**

**Sara Wood:** And so he just shrimped for the family?

**00:03:06**

**Danny Manigault:** Yes, he did, uh-huh.

**00:03:08**

**Sara Wood:** Can you remember—can you share any stories or memories of what it was like to go out with him as a boy?

**00:03:14**

**Danny Manigault:** Well I can remember we—it was just a little old rowboat and we used to row across the Cooper River and we would go casting for the shrimp and on the way back he would just pop the heads off the shrimp and eat those things raw. And I was never able to do that. That's what I really can remember about him. [*Laughs*]

**00:03:34**

**Sara Wood:** Do you eat shrimp now?

**00:03:35**

**Danny Manigault:** Yes I do, but not raw. [*Laughs*]

**00:03:40**

**Sara Wood:** And I'm wondering. You said that you started crabbing 'cause your neighbor was doing it and you made a little money on the side. What were you doing on the other side?

**00:03:48**

**Danny Manigault:** I was a mechanic at R&M Industrial Products in North Charleston.

**00:03:56**

**Sara Wood:** How—do you still work there?

**00:03:58**

**Danny Manigault:** No, I retired. Uh-hm.

**00:04:01**

**Sara Wood:** So was there a point where you started crabbing most of the time or do you just do it—?

**00:04:06**

**Danny Manigault:** No, it was—I was just crabbing after I got off from work, like a part-time job. Then after I retired then I started doing it full-time.

**00:04:16**

**Sara Wood:** For somebody who has never been out there what's it like to be out there crabbing? What does it feel like to you?

**00:04:21**

**Danny Manigault:** Well I've been doing it so long now it just come automatically. Nice cool breeze early in the morning but in the daytime it could get pretty hot with the sun shining down on you. Uh, it's not a pleasant feeling in the evening time.

**00:04:37**

**Sara Wood:** Do you usually go out early in the morning?

**00:04:41**

**Danny Manigault:** Early in the morning yes and then I'm—I guess around eight-thirty or nine o'clock I'm finished with the river. Now it's just for me to come in and sell the crabs in here.

**00:04:51**

**Sara Wood:** And as long as you've been crabbing, Mr. Manigault, have—have people come to your door here and they—they come pick up the crabs? Can you talk about how it works, how you sell?

**00:04:58**

**Danny Manigault:** Well, I bring the crabs in and then they'll call and—well they call me Danny. "Danny I'd like to get two dozen crabs," and I'll—I'll have it ready when they get here. I'll have it all bagged up and they can pick it up and they're gone.

**00:05:15**

**Sara Wood:** And how many—how many bushels do you bring on a regular day?

**00:05:20**

**Danny Manigault:** Three to four bushels per day.

**00:05:22**

**Sara Wood:** Do you usually sell all of them?

**00:05:23**

**Danny Manigault:** Yes, I do sell them all. Rarely do I have a—maybe a dozen or so left over.

**00:05:30**

**Sara Wood:** And then what do you do with those when you—when you have some left over?

**00:05:34**

**Danny Manigault:** All you have to do is keep them cool. You keep them cool they’ll—most of them will live until the next day, then you just sell them.

**00:05:40**

**Sara Wood:** And where do you usually like how many pots do you have out there?

**00:05:45**

**Danny Manigault:** Right now I have about forty-five, maybe—maybe fifty that’s—yeah that’s about how many—how many I have now.

**00:05:53**

**Sara Wood:** How many did you start with?

**00:05:54**

**Danny Manigault:** Fifteen.

**00:05:56**

**Sara Wood:** Fifteen?

**00:05:57**

**Danny Manigault:** Uh-hm.

**00:05:58**

**Sara Wood:** What was the learning curve for something like that?

**00:06:02**

**Danny Manigault:** The learning purpose?

**00:06:02**

**Sara Wood:** Yeah, the curve because I went out on a crab boat for the first time the other day and I don't even know how y'all keep track of where your pots are.

**00:06:09**

**Danny Manigault:** Well you—after you've been doing it for such a long period of time you just happen to know where everything is. And then you have a marker on your—on your buoy. You have numbers on it rather and you pull yours and then you take the crab pot and you bait it up and throw it back out again.

**00:06:26**

**Sara Wood:** Do you ever catch any stone crabs?

**00:06:29**

**Danny Manigault:** Every now and again you'll catch one or two, maybe three of them per day. But I don't usually keep them.

**00:06:37**

**Sara Wood:** And do most of your customers come from around the neighborhood or do they come from afar?

**00:06:43**

**Danny Manigault:** Well, I’ve had people coming from west of the Ashley, east of the Cooper, Goose Creek, Monck’s Corner, they come from all over, uh-hm. And there are those who—if they had like on vacation they’ll get some crabs or prepare them at home and freeze them and take them back wherever they’re going.

**00:07:05**

**Sara Wood:** Do you fix them here for yourself?

**00:07:07**

**Danny Manigault:** Once in a while I make cook a dozen or so but not too often. I’ve been around them so much that I—I just don’t care for it like I used to.

**00:07:17**

**Sara Wood:** Well when you do prepare it for yourself how do—what do you usually do with them?

**00:07:20**

**Danny Manigault:** I just boil them, salt, pepper, and that’s it. Just boil them for about a half an hour and sit down and crack it and eat it.

**00:07:32**

**Sara Wood:** Mr. Manigault what are the biggest challenges for the—this kind of work for you?

**00:07:37**

**Danny Manigault:** Being out in the cold, out in the elements, hoping nothing happens to your boat while you’re out there because you’re not only like on the highway. There’s no—not always another boat passing by that would help you. That’s one of the biggest challenges right there, uh-hm.

**00:07:54**

**Sara Wood:** And what do you love most about it?

**00:07:55**

**Danny Manigault:** It’s kind of rewarding and I just—I just like the freedom. I can—I can go if I want to and if I don’t feel like going I just don’t go, uh-hm.

**00:08:07**

**Sara Wood:** And can you kind of talk about like where—where all you go? [*Sound of thunder outside – there’s a massive thunderstorm*] Do you stick to a particular river or creek or do you—?

**00:08:14**

**Danny Manigault:** Well mostly I crab right in the Wando—Wando River and very rarely do I come out of that area.

**00:08:23**

**Sara Wood:** Do you see a lot of crabbers out there now?

**00:08:25**

**Danny Manigault:** Yeah, there’s a lot of crabbers out there now. Years ago it was only—maybe only about five or six of us and now it must be about forty of us.

**00:08:33**

**Sara Wood:** What do you think has changed that—why so many people are crabbing now? Do you have any idea?

**00:08:39**

**Danny Manigault:** Well it—it kind of—see it’s kind of rewarding. You can make a few dollars off it, and you don’t have to work as hard. And they have a boat so I guess they’ll try it, uh-hm.

**00:08:50**

**Sara Wood:** Do you see a lot of people out there for the first time and you kind of just shake your head at them like, “They’ll maybe they’ll learn?”

**00:08:57**

**Danny Manigault:** Well I just think about me. You know there was a first time for me, too so if they shook their head at me I was—I was determined that I was going to do it, so I guess they’re determined that they’re going to do it, so that’s that.

**00:09:10**

**Sara Wood:** Was there ever a moment where you thought you might just quit?

**00:09:13**

**Danny Manigault:** No. *[Laughs]* No, it’s something that I like to do. If you enjoy doing something you—you don’t want to quit. Even at my age now I don’t want to quit but I need to.

**00:09:27**

**Sara Wood:** Do you still have the first boat you had or do you—have you—?

**00:09:29**

**Danny Manigault:** No, that boat is gone. No it’s gone, uh-hm.

**00:09:34**

**Sara Wood:** And do you want any of your children or grandchildren to crab or follow in your footsteps?

**00:09:40**

**Danny Manigault:** Well I had a son that was doing it but then he—doing it and then he found another job so then he went doing that so—no. *[Laughs]*

**00:09:51**

**Sara Wood:** And what is your son’s name?

**00:09:53**

**Danny Manigault:** Nathaniel Jr.

**00:09:55**

**Sara Wood:** And you—I—I was introduced to you by Julie Grant [from Bertha’s Kitchen, down the street] who was—referred to you as Danny and you said your name is Nathaniel. Why do people call you Danny?

**00:10:03**

**Danny Manigault:** It’s a nickname my grandmother give me. I don’t know how she got Danny from Nathaniel but however she got it, it stuck with me. And I’ve been Danny [*Laughs*] seventy-four years.

**00:10:17**

**Sara Wood:** And—and do people—people around the Union Heights area I mean is crab really popular around here? Do you get a lot of customers from in the neighborhood?

**00:10:27**

**Danny Manigault:** Yeah, I get a lot of my customers right from this general area right here. They know me and they’ll come and get from me. If you sell a good product they’ll come and get it from you, uh-hm.

**00:10:36**

**Sara Wood:** Well, I don’t want to keep you ‘cause I know you have to pick up the kids from school—or from the baby-sitter. But is there anything else you want to add that you think is

important Mr. Manigault that I didn't ask you or didn't know to ask you—you want to add about crabbing out there on the Wando?

**00:10:54**

**Danny Manigault:** No, I don't think so. I—I guess you summed it all up. It's just something I enjoy doing. I don't know how much longer I'll be able to do it but I—right now I'm still enjoying it.

**00:11:06**

**Sara Wood:** Have you taught people along the way? Have there been anybody that—you know you mentioned your son, Nathaniel Jr., are there other people you've mentored crabbing?

**00:11:14**

**Danny Manigault:** No, they don't like to get up that early in the morning so the answer to that is no. [*Laughs*]

**00:11:19**

**Sara Wood:** What time do you get up?

**00:11:21**

**Danny Manigault:** I'm up at four o'clock in the morning. I'm in the river around four-thirty, five o'clock.

**00:11:30**

**Sara Wood:** Well, Mr. Manigault I just want to thank you for sitting down with me this afternoon.

**00:11:35**

**Danny Manigault:** It's been a pleasure.

**00:11:37**

**[End Danny Manigault Interview]**